



*Office of the United States Attorney
District of Arizona*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday, November 20, 2007

For Information Contact Public Affairs
SANDY RAYNOR
Telephone: (602) 514-7625
Cell: (602) 525-2681

WHITERIVER WOMAN SENTENCED TO OVER 21 YEARS IN PRISON FOR VIOLENT MURDER

PHOENIX—Shawnell Shya Kasey, 23, of Whiteriver, Ariz. was sentenced here on Monday, November 19th to 254 months (just over 21 years) in federal prison by U.S. District Judge Mary H. Murguia. Kasey pleaded guilty on June 4, 2007 to Second Degree Murder in the stabbing death of 19-year-old Santana Paxson on the Ft. Apache Indian Reservation in June 2006.

On June 2, 2006, Kasey gave a ride to Santana Paxson from the Hon Dah Casino on the Ft. Apache Indian Reservation so that they could drink in the Canyon Day community. After drinking together for a while, Kasey grabbed Paxson around the neck from behind and held her as others began to kick and punch Paxson. As the assault occurred, Kasey stabbed the victim in the back several times, continuing stabbing her even after the victim fell to the ground. The body was later transported and dumped in a nearby river. Her body was recovered the next morning.

At the time of Paxson's murder, Kasey and others believed that Paxson had been responsible for the death of Kasey's best friend, Carmen Burnette, in January 2006. Santana and her boyfriend found Burnette's body, leaving Burnette's family and friends to believe that Paxson was responsible for the death, which was ruled an accidental fall or possible suicide by authorities. An autopsy revealed that Santana Paxson died as a result of 30 stab wounds, all inflicted by Kasey.

The investigation in this case was conducted by the White Mountain Apache Police Department, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The prosecution was handled by Vincent Q. Kirby, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Phoenix.

CASE NUMBER: CR-06-775-PCT-MHM
RELEASE NUMBER: 2007-240(Kasey)

###